



VOICES ~ A Nationwide Network Advocating for Kids

### Dear Supporters and Friends:

With a recent election cycle that monopolized the nation's attention and a presidential transition now close at hand, 2007 seems like a long time ago. It was in fact an important year for Voices for America's Children, as the organization took tremendous strides toward enhancing its role as a federal advocate and strengthening its status as the only broad national network of child advocacy organizations.

During a year marked perhaps most prominently by our energetic participation in the debate over reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Voices took a number of internal steps in 2007 to make our organization even more effective. Most notably, we reconstituted our board of directors, passing a by-law change that calls for a majority of independent members. At the same time, we bolstered our Member Leadership Council (MLC) to include 14 state members who played an active role in shaping our network's strategy and tactics. We have already realized great benefits from adding more independent voices to our governance while continuing to draw on the strength of our members through the MLC to inform our work.

At the end of the day, our successes in advocating for improved outcomes for U.S. children can be best attributed to the experience, expertise and passion found in Voices staff, its board, and especially its member organizations. Within their states, and increasingly at the federal level, these advocates tirelessly give voice to the children who otherwise do not have a powerful lobby arguing their case at the policy table. This report highlights much of the progress that was made at all levels in 2007, even while the national office was completing our transition on the governance front and our moves toward a greater federal focus. A report on 2008 will continue the story of how this unique national network is making a difference for the children of America.

Sincerely,

WALTER H. SMITH, JR., PH.D.  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

BILL BENTLEY  
*President & CEO*



## Who We Are

VOICES FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN is a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan network of child advocacy organizations committed to speaking out for children at the local, state and federal levels of government. Founded in 1984 (as the National Association of Child Advocates) and based in

Washington, DC, we support 60 member organizations nationwide.

Voices supports members advocating for children in their states, advocates directly for effective national public policies, and leads national campaigns to improve public policies affecting children throughout the United States.



## Who are our members? Here are some facts:

- ★ The 58 member organizations who participated in a 2007 Voices survey invest nearly **\$53 million annually** in their public information and policy and advocacy work, engaging a national workforce of **806 staff**, and **989 governance volunteers** who serve on their boards.
- ★ Full members must be independent state- or locally-based multi-issue child advocacy organizations whose primary purpose is not the provision of direct services and which does not function as an association of service providers.
- ★ The average annual budget of Voices members is just over \$760,000.
- ★ The greatest proportion of funding for members is received from private foundations, which provide 98 percent of the membership an average of slightly over 50 percent of their funding. State government and public/corporate foundations are reported as the next greatest sources of funding.
- ★ Our newest member in 2007 was the Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy in New York.

### 2007 Financial Information *For the Year Ended December 31, 2007* *From audited financial prepared by* *McQuade Brennan, LLP, Washington, D.C.*

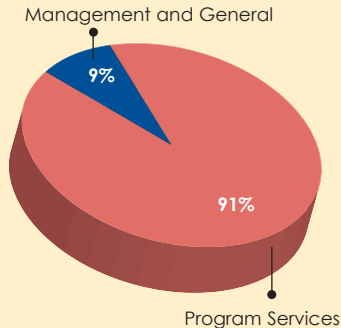
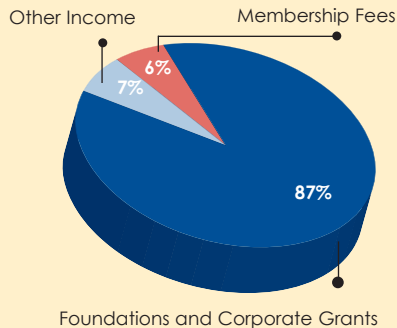
Revenue & Support	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Grants	\$100,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,500,000
2008 Membership Dues	103,235		103,235
Contributions	66,585		66,585
Other Income	61,506		61,506
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	1,107,251	(1,107,251)	0

<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<b>1,438,577</b>	<b>292,749</b>	<b>1,731,326</b>
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Expenses	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Program Expenses	\$2,384,864		\$2,384,864
Management and General	225,706		225,706
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,610,570</b>		<b>2,610,570</b>

<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(1,171,993)</b>	<b>(292,749)</b>	<b>(879,244)</b>
<b>Net Assets Beginning of Year</b>	<b>670,881</b>	<b>353,533</b>	<b>1,024,414</b>

<b>Net Assets End of Year</b>	<b>\$501,112</b>	<b>\$646,282</b>	<b>\$145,170</b>
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## Grant Support

Voices for America's Children and its members receive generous grant support from a number of public, private and corporate foundations. A sampling of prominent sources of support from 2007 includes:



Anonymous  
Annie C. Casey Foundation  
The Atlantic Philanthropies  
California Endowment  
Mutual of America

**For more information about ways to support Voices for America's Children and its mission, contact George Askew, Deputy CEO, at Askew@voices.org or (202) 289-0777.**



## Our Work In 2007

The unmet needs of America's children are well documented. Consider a few national statistics from the annual *KIDS COUNT* Data Book from the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

- ★ 18 percent of U.S. children live in poverty—at least 20 percent in 14 states
- ★ 11 percent of children 17 and below do not have health insurance
- ★ 32 percent of children under age 18 live in a single parent household
- ★ 42 teenagers per 1,000 gave birth between the ages of 15 and 19
- ★ Only 32 percent of 4th graders scored at or above proficient reading level

The *KidShare – 2007* report from the Urban Institute further illustrates the challenge: federal spending on children has declined from 20.1 to 15.4 percent of all domestic spending since 1960. This funding picture faces further declines in the upcoming decade, due to the aging of society and growing demands upon entitlement spending, largely for seniors.

While philanthropy, nonprofits and educators nationwide commit considerable resources to address the needs of children, it is clear that efforts to help one child at a time are inadequate to meet the needs of the millions of children in crisis in the United States. The only comprehensive means of improving their lives is through effective public policy—at all levels of government—that puts children first.

Based on this imperative, Voices for America's Children believes firmly that policy change and public attitudes are intimately related. We are committed to working with our 60 members to educating the public on the needs of children. Each year, Voices becomes more effective at influencing the policy process at all levels by deploying and coordinating the resources of our unique nationwide network.

In 2007, we made significant strides toward our overall goals through work in four functional areas: **1)** federal advocacy, **2)** state-level advocacy, **3)** capacity building and **4)** policy research. ■

## State-Level Advocacy Speaking Out for Children in the States

Federal policy changes have the potential for massive nationwide impact through the stroke of a pen, but many of the most important changes affecting children happen at the state level every day. The 60 organizations that comprise the Voices network are constantly at work on the policy challenges that they've identified as most crucial for the children of their respective states. The year 2007 saw many significant successes at the state level. Here are just a few that illustrate the diverse successes that Voices members achieved on behalf of children and families.

**California:** NBC and Telemundo Networks, along with their 26 owned and operated stations, banned advertisements for unhealthy foods during their children's educational programming. Voices member **Children Now** helped drive this outcome in September 2007 by leading a coalition of advocates and public health groups to pressure media companies to serve as gatekeepers and monitor children's advertising environments.

**Kansas:** Voices member **Kansas Action for Children** helped bring about an improvement in newborn screening laws so that the state now mandates screening for 29 treatable conditions. Before these changes newborns in Kansas were only screened for seven treatable conditions.

**North Carolina:** 2007 saw an expansion of child health insurance to cover families living at 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Voices member **Action for Children North Carolina** convened a task force, employed an actuary, designed a plan to cover all children in the state and presented it to the governor and legislature.

**New Jersey:** Voices member **The Association for Children of New Jersey** helped enact legislation to establish a seamless system of credit transfer from two-year to four-year state colleges. ACNJ took the lead on this issue as part of its work in ensuring a high-quality and diverse workforce. The organization worked with legislators and college presidents to facilitate discussion and planning and advocated with a broad base of constituents to ensure its passage.

**Wisconsin:** Voices member **Wisconsin Council on Children and Families** worked for the successful passage of BadgerCare Plus, ensuring health care coverage for almost all children in the state. The Council provided data and analysis to both advocates and the state department of health and family services staff and used the voter file to conduct patch-through calls to key legislative targets. ■

**In 2007, Voices worked with its member organizations to establish six key policy goals and supporting principles to further the positive and healthy development of all children in America. These goals guide all of our strategies and initiatives.**

- Equity:** **1** All children achieve their full potential in a society that closes opportunity gaps and recognizes and values diversity.
- Health:** **2** All children receive affordable, comprehensive, high-quality health care.
- School Readiness:** **3** All children and their parents receive the services and supports to enable them to start school prepared for success.
- School Success:** **4** All children have an equal opportunity to attend an adequately and equitably financed public school that meets rigorous academic standards aligned with the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.
- Safety:** **5** All children are safe in their homes and communities from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence, avoid risky behaviors; and contribute to community well-being.
- Economic Stability:** **6** All children live in families that can provide for their needs and make investments in their future.

# Federal Advocacy

## Advancing the Children's Agenda in Washington

Historically, Voices has been a member-driven organization, with its work focused largely on supporting the efforts of its state-level members. In 2007, the national office took a major step toward becoming a more forceful federal advocate, particularly in the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Voices took action in 2007 to make children a priority on the congressional agenda. In addition to SCHIP advocacy, Voices' sustained collaborative work on Head Start, the early child education and development program, paid dividends when, after five years of political stalemate, the program received a five-year reauthorization. Voices also collaborated with other organizations in securing funding for children's health programs in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations

Bill. These successes were achieved in collaboration with Child Care NOW!, the Children's Health Alliance, and the Medicaid Coalition to name a few.

Other notable federal policy work included:

- ★ Provide critical support for State Children's Health Insurance Program legislation.
- ★ Initiation of a reauthorization strategy around the Food Stamp Program.
- ★ Mobilization around reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act.
- ★ Participation in the *Partnership to Protect Children and Strengthen Families*, a major new initiative that unites various human service and child advocate workers and agencies

**"The efforts of Voices for America's Children have been critical to the passage of the SCHIP bill. I hope the President hears the voices of the broad, bipartisan coalition of groups, such as yours, when he considers his next actions on this bill."**

Nancy Pelosi, *Speaker of the House*  
(September 27, 2007)

around specific recommendations for the financing of child welfare services.

- ★ Shared leadership in building a coalition of national organizations of child advocates and allied partners that in 2008 became the new Children's Leadership Council. ■

## Voices' Role in SCHIP Reauthorization

When it comes to health care for our nation's children, Voices is focused not only on increasing the number of children covered, but also on the quality of the care they receive.

First passed in 1997, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was designed and launched under the Clinton Administration to cover uninsured children in families with incomes that are modest but too high to qualify for Medicaid. SCHIP allows states to allocate funds to families most in need. Despite its success, 9 million children and youth under the age of 19 remain uninsured, of which 6 million are currently eligible but not enrolled in either Medicaid or SCHIP.

Voices recognized that SCHIP would be even more vital to struggling families during the current period of economic depression. In both 2006 and 2007, the organization's national staff coordinated comprehensive advocacy activities among its 60 member members and other national partners. Voices facilitated direct, constituent-based contacts with key members of Congress and had a uniquely effective impact on the national SCHIP debate.

As one example, Voices involved several members to help identify undecided political leaders in their respective states. Given their knowledge of their respective state political cultures and close relationships with their congressional representatives, state members were able to guide the targeting of Voices' national efforts. Voices national office secured funding, rang-



ing from \$15,000 to \$50,000, to support SCHIP-related advocacy in a total of 16 states.

Both at the state and national level, Voices staff contacted members of Congress to enlist their support of SCHIP and encourage them to take on more leadership roles in children's healthcare issues. For two years Voices worked with its national partners—including the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), the Georgetown Center for Children and Families, and Families

USA—to monitor political discussions on SCHIP and provide tailored messages to congressmen and senators about the importance of continued health insurance coverage for children.

The joint efforts of Voices and its members helped win support for SCHIP from several congressmen who either initially voted against it or were uncertain of their vote. Constant communication between Voices' national staff and its state organizations was essential in keeping members up-to-date on a united message in their advocacy, and reaching out to swing voters in both Houses.

While the president's veto in early 2008 ultimately blocked the reauthorization, there was undeniable progress in both Houses and on both sides of the aisle. Key legislators and the general public are more informed about the serious health needs of uninsured children, the extent of those living without a health insurance safety net, and the arguments for and against coverage. Voices will continue to work to ensure that all needy children can have access to quality health care. ■

Per-capita Medicaid costs for children are the lowest of all eligible groups. Children represent nearly half of all Medicaid beneficiaries, but account for only 19 percent of total program spending.



## Member Capacity Building Strengthening the Network

Building the capacity of our 60 members is core to the Voices mission. Even as we become more directly engaged at the federal level, we never lose sight of our mission to strengthen the work of our members by providing actionable information, staff training and new tools to help support their mobilization efforts. Some 2007 highlights included:

**Commitment to financial support for members.** We passed through grants totaling \$420,000 in 2007, supporting members' advocacy around SCHIP reauthorization (\$50,000 each in Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Rhode Island, Utah) and advancing additional dominant state-level policy issues in three states (\$40,000 each in Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania).

**"A child is abused and neglected in America every 36 seconds. The Department of Health and Human Services reports that only six of every ten abused and neglected children get services."**

Partnership to Protect Children and Strengthen Families

**Convening members for information sharing.** Our "Calling All Advocates" series gathered Voices members and KIDS COUNT grantees via conference calls throughout 2007 to hear from their expert colleagues, national staff and external experts on a range of topics

including policy, fundraising, nonprofit management and communications. Our **2007 Annual Forum**, with nearly 75 members attending, was held in New Orleans and successfully highlighted the fundamental connections between children's issues and poverty. Voices also held a "Community Engagement Seminar" that drew staff from 32 member organizations and KIDS COUNT grantees.

**Recognizing excellence.** Each year Voices awards the Florette Angel Memorial Child Advocacy Award to give peer recognition to child advocacy leadership excellence. Elizabeth Burke Bryant of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT was the 2007 honoree.

**Partnering for long-term planning.** Working in conjunction with our partner The National Women's Law Center, Voices brought 13 members and other early care and education experts together to re-think long-term child care advocacy strategies.

**Peer-to-peer skills-sharing.** Voices initiated a formal effort to allow members to expand their expertise by traveling to meet with a colleague in the Voices network

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## Voices Member Organizations

(as of December 31, 2007)

Member organizations are alphabetized according to state

VOICES for Alabama's Children  
Children's Action Alliance (AZ)  
Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families  
Children Now (CA)  
Children's Advocacy Institute (CA)  
Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth (CA)  
Kids in Common (CA)  
Colorado Children's Campaign  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
KIDS COUNT in Delaware  
DC Action for Children  
Children's Campaign, Inc. (FL)  
Voices for Georgia's Children  
Good Beginnings Alliance (HI)  
Idaho Voices for Children  
Voices for Illinois Children  
Child & Family Policy Center (IA)  
Kansas Action for Children  
Kentucky Youth Advocates  
Agenda for Children (LA)  
Maine Children's Alliance  
Advocates for Children & Youth (MD)  
Massachusetts Citizens for Children  
Michigan's Children  
Priority Children (MI)  
Mississippi Forum on Children and Families  
Citizens for Missouri's Children  
Partnership for Children (KS/MO)  
Voices for Children in Nebraska  
Children's Advocacy Alliance (NV)  
Children's Alliance of New Hampshire  
Association for Children of New Jersey  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy (NY)  
Westchester Children's Association (NY)  
Action for Children North Carolina  
North Dakota KIDS COUNT!  
Voices for Ohio's Children  
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy  
Children First for Oregon  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
Public Citizens for Children & Youth  
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT  
Voices for South Carolina's Children  
South Dakota KIDS COUNT  
South Dakota Voices for Children  
Black Children's Institute of Tennessee  
Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth  
CHILDREN AT RISK (TX)  
Texans Care for Children  
Voices for Children of San Antonio  
Voices for Utah Children  
Voices for Virginia's Children  
Voices for Vermont's Children  
Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands  
Children's Alliance (WA)  
West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund  
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families  
Wyoming Children's Action Alliance



## Member Capacity Building

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for an in-depth cross-site experience. In 2007, staff from Children First for Oregon visited the Colorado Children's Campaign to gain fundraising expertise and staff from Idaho Voices for Children sought policy/advocacy strategic assistance from the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.

**Communications to inform.** One of the great values members see in Voices membership is the ability to be kept informed of developments in Washington that affect children and families in their region. Voices continued to communicate regularly with members, with new constituent management and web technology enhancing our efforts.



## Policy Research Informing the Debate

Although research is not a central focus of Voices' work, we do compile, commission or author reports each year which help inform the public on the state of children's policy. To complement other available data from partner groups (e.g. the annual KIDS COUNT report) and advance understanding of the policy landscape, Voices completed two important projects in 2007:

We commissioned an early care and education advocacy strategies report profiling 10 Voices members.

We published an expanded *Promises to America's Children* report, which compiles and analyzes the governors' 2007 "state of the states" addresses. The report is used by our members and other advocates to press for governors to make child well-being an explicit priority in their agenda—and to measure how successfully they live up to their prior pledges. ■

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FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN

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